Decoration Day Band Concert

Before my own brother died
I liked Decoration Day
We'd visit with clippers
and rakes relatives that stretched
across Clallam County.

While my father clipped old sod
my mother tidied headstones.
I'd run with seldom seen
cousins across grandmothers
and long dead uncles,

Between blood-strong peonies
and snowballs in mason jars,
and read familiar names
like songs from a tone-deaf time
I thought I could hear.

The best place was the grey stone
that was my soldier uncle,
my father's favorite I
never knew. We always brought
a flag to put there.

Having nobody dead here,
I bring my son instead
of lilacs to play in this
graveyard; trombones slide at right
angles with the flag.

His blue uniform loops me cold
in shining braid and gold
overlay. He plays something
military to celebrate
an old, old way of dying.

-- Joan E. Stone

Issaquah, Washington

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Note: Index to vol. 1-3 found in issue 12: pp. 36-39; index to vol. 4-6 found in issue 24: pp. 36-38

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¶ A -- Anderson, Jack/25: 7; Anonymous/36: cover (adapted fm. Book of Durrow); Arone, Phyllis Onstott/31: 10-11;

¶ B -- Banker, Lynne/34: 22-23; Bassett, Barbara/31: 33-34; Baxter, E. R./25: 24-25; Bell, Harry/30:22-23, 25-29; Berge, Carol/

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